Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00097 120350Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARA-10
EA-10 NEA-10 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 /102 W
----------124505 120354Z /72
O P 120259Z JAN 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9044
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0097

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: CONTACT GROUP DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS ON
PROXIMITY TALKS

1. CONTACT GROUP MET PM JANUARY 11 TO DISCUSS SITUATION
CREATED BY SOUTH AFRICAN'S POSITION THAT JANUARY 23 IS LATEST
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PAGE 02 USUN N 00097 120350Z

POSSIBLE STARTING DATE OF PROXIMITY TALKS AND SWAPO'S
AGREEMENT TO ANY TIME AFTER JANUARY 30. AFTER CONSULTING
WITH CAPITALS, GROUP WILL MEET AGAIN AM JANUARY 12.

2. AS CONTACT GROUP SAW SITUATION, THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
MUST BE ADDRESSED: (A) IS ANOTHER APPROACH TO SWAPO IN ORDER?
(B) IS ANOTHER APPROACH TO SOUTH AFRICA IN ORDER?

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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AND (C) IF PROXIMITY TALKS CANNOT BE ARRANGED, ARE
SEPARATE TALKS DESIRABLE?

3. CANADA AND UK SUGGESTED THAT ANOTHER APPROACH TO
SWAPO SHOULD BE MADE, REQUESTING THAT THEY RECONSIDER
JANUARY 23 AS A POSSIBLE STARTING DATE. WE SAID THAT
US WOULD PROBABLY AGREE TO SUCH AN APPROACH ONLY IF
AN APPROACH WERE ALSO MADE TO SOUTH AFRICA. BOTH CANADA
AND UK CONSIDERED LATTER APPROACH WITH RELUCTANCE
BUT STATED THAT THEY COULD PROBABLY AGREE TO SUUCH AN
APPROACH AS AS LONG AS IT WAS RESTRICTED TO AGAIN WARNING
SOUTH AFRICA AGAINST ANNOUNCING AN ELECTION DATE AND TO
ASKING THEM TO RECONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF PROXIMITY TALKS
IN FEBRUARY. US WAS JOINED BY FRG IN ARGUING FOR TOUGHER
LINE WITH SOUTH AFRICA. WE SUGGESTED THAT SOUTH AFRICA BE
TOLD THAT FIVE ARE TRYING TO ACCOMDATE SOUTH AFRICA'S
PREFERENCE FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD BUT THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT
THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO HOLD TALKS AFTER FEBRUARY. WE
FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT SOUTH AFRICA BE ASKED TO NAME AN
ACCEPTABLE DATE ON WHICH TALKS COULD BE HELD IN FEBRUARY,
AND THAT THEY BE TOLD THAT THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO NAME SUCH
A DATE COULD EASILY BE SEEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
AS A LACK OF INTEREST IN AN INTERNATIONAL
ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. CANADIANS AND
BRITISH PREFERRED THEIR MILDER APPROACH BUT SAID THEY WOULD
CONSULT THEIR CAPITALS. FRENCH SAT QUIETLY ON SIDELINES.
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PAGE 03 USUN N 00097 120350Z

4. ATTENTION THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER
SEPARATE TALKS WOULD BE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE IN
THE EVENT THAT PROXIMITY TALKS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE.
BOTH CANADIANS AND BRITISH BELIEVE, IF ARRANGEMENTS FOR
PROXIMITY TALKS DO NOT MATERIALIZE, WE SHOULD DECIDE TO
GO AHEAD WITH SEPARATE TALKS WITH THE TWO PARTIES. THE
BRITISH IN PARTICULAR ARGUE THAT WE RISK ABETTING SOUTH
AFRICA'S EFFORT TO SET THE STAGE FOR UNILATERAL
ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ELECTION DATE AT THE END OF THE MONTH
IF WE REFUSE TO MEET WITH THEM THIS MONTH. THEY ADMIT
THE DISADVTANGES OF BOTHA'S PRESENCE IN NEW YORK, HOWEVER,
AND ARE WILLING TO DISCUSS WHETHER PRESENTATION OF OUR
PROPOSALS MIGHT NOT BETTER BE DONE BY OUR REPRESENTATIVES
IN PRETORIA. THEY ARGUE THAT REFUSAL TO MEET WILL ALMOST
CERTAINLY PRODUCE THE SOUTH AFRICAN ANNOUNCEMENT. THEY
AGREE THAT QUESTION OF SEPARATE TALKS SHOULD NOT BE
ENTERAINED AS LONG AS THERE IS A CHANCE OF PROXIMITY TALKS,
THIS MONTH OR LATER, THEY ALSO AGREED THAT EVERY EFFORT
SHOULD BE MADE TO FORESTALL THE UNILATERAL SOUTH AFRICAN
ANNOUNCEMENT, WHICH THEY BELIEVE WOULD BE THE DEATH-KNELL
OF THE NEGOTIATING EFFORT.

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

5. FRG AND US EXPRESSED STRONG OPPOSITION TO AGREEING TO RECEIVE BOTHA SEPARATELY IN NEW YORK. WE EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR A CONTINUED STRONG POSTURE IN APPROACHES TO THE PARTIES, IN PARTICULAR THE NEED TO WARN SOUTH AFRICA AWAY FROM A UNILATERAL MOVE. WE ARGUED THAT SEPARATE TALKS HAVE SERVED UNTIL NOW, BUT THERE IS NEED NOW TO TAKE DIFFERENT TACK. WE ALL AGREED THAT, IF HOPE OF PROXIMITY TALKS DISAPPEARS, THE MANNER, TIMING, SITE AND OTHER MODALITIES OF SEPARATE TALKS WILL HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED.

6. COMMENT: THE ON-GOING DEBATE ABOUT WHICH OF THE PARTIES IS GRINDING THE NEGOTIATING MOMENTUM TO A HALT WAS OBVIOUS THROUGHOUT THIS DISCUSSION. MOST OF THE GROUP ARE ASSUMING CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 USUN N 00097 120350Z

THAT ALL OF OUR MANEUVERS, AND THOSE OF SWAPO AND SOUTH AFRICA, NOW ARE DIRECTED TOWARD PREPARATION OF A STANCE TO DEAL WITH FAILURE.

7. IF THE PROXIMITY TALKS IDEA FOUNDERS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OPTIONS TO CONSIDER, IN ADDITION TO SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH THE PARTIES IN NEW YORK: (A) DISTRIBUTION OF PROPOSALS TO BOTH SIDES (AND PRESUMABLY OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES) WITH REQUEST FOR COMMENTS OR FURTHER TALKS; (B) PUBLICATION OF THE PROPOSALS; (C) SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING; OR (D) APPROACHES TO THE PARTIES BY AMBASSADORS IN LUSAKA AND PRETORIA COUPLED WITH PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS. END COMMENT.

LEONARD

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